ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION

I. The Turkic Peoples of Sinkiang

563 517 A. General Introduction

The artistic and intellectual expressions of the peoples of Sinkiang vary greatly from those of the people of China proper. The culture of the Eastern Turkis is influenced greatly by Islamic civilization, and constitutes a culturally integral part of Turkestan as a whole.

563 517 53 545 The artistic and intellectual creative achievements are contained in the vast written and oral literature of the Turkic people, in their extensive folklore, folk music and dance. The arts of painting and sculpture are a tradition of the past, and have scarcely been practiced since the conversion of the Turkic people to Islam. Turkic theatre, with the exception of shadow theatre, was virtually unknown in Sinkiang prior to the Communist era. The Communists have introduced dramatic art into Eastern Turkestan, the modern theatrical productions being on the Soviet model for drama among national minorities.

563 517 53 177 "Unfortunately, contact with Europe and the natural intercourse with the neighboring state of Russia are gradually destroying these beautiful arts and crafts which have been preserved here from earlier times" (Le Coq, Albert von, Buried Treasures of Eastern Turkestan, p. 41). Most of the various forms of art and intellectual expression of the people of Sinkiang are today in a state of decline. The contact with industrialized Russia and the intellectual atmosphere created by the Communist regime have produced unfavorable circumstances for the further development of the Eastern Turki artistic and intellectual expression. The important works of art are to be found in the already accumulated artistic creations.

B. Turkic Literature and Oral Art

563 538 The literary heritage of Eastern Turkestan is not limited alone to the works produced in this geographical area, but encompasses also much of the Turkic literature produced in other parts of Inner Asia as well as much of the Islamic literature. Little of the Eastern Turki literature is completely original and particular to this area alone; most of it being the common heritage of the Turks as a whole and some of it common to the other believers in Islam.

[195] The earliest important literary achievements known to us in Eastern Turkestan were written in the Uighur language and date back to pre-Islamic times. These literary documents are re-

/Turkic Peoples of Sinkiang/

286 Khotan is the most famous of the cities in Sinkiang in the
531 production of the famous oriental rugs, in needlework and also
199 in metal works (Kashgar and Yarkand are also important centers of rug weaving). The design of many of the rugs is a most interesting mixture of Persian and Chinese styles. The whole treatment is unmistakeably Persian, though many small details are Chinese. The same blending of the Far with the Near East is found in the beautiful embroidery of Khotan. The stitch chiefly used in the embroidery is the Turkish chain stitch, which is not found in the embroidery in China, but the wave and cloud patterns, the butterflies and some of the flowers are definitely of Chinese design. Khotan is also famous for its craftsmanship in brass and copper household utensils decorated with elaborate floral designs in pierced metal work.

328
531
415

286 Kuch in the north has been famous for generations for the
294 gold and silver embroidery on velvet. Women's indoor caps are
531 the chief article of manufacture. The design as a whole is Per-
[199] sian, but the use of circular medallions in embroidery on robes is a Chinese device.

53
517
199
198

There has been a tremendous decline in all these works of art and articrafts in the present century, mainly because of the availability of factory-manufactured cheap objects of daily use, from both Russia and China proper. Thus, the carpets of Khotan and the surrounding country are slowly disappearing, and their quality has gone down. The expensive handmade items are replaced by the cheap materials provided by modern industry. The class of artists and artisans has declined, since it is impossible for them to compete with new imported products.

517
532
199
668

The artistic expressions inspired by the new Communist regime are totally different from the old indigenous ones. They center around paintings and statues glorifying the present-day leaders, and describing episodes from the life of the newly "liberated" working class. Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit and traditions of the Eastern Turkis.

E. Music and Dance

533
529

The taste for music and dance is highly developed in Sinkiang, and it constitutes the main means of entertainment for important social occasions. There are professional musicians (maghmatchi) organized in bands of three or four individuals, available for hire. At many public feasts, a band is hired for entertainment. The musicians chant as they play their instruments. The tunes are simple, composed primarily for accompaniment to the dance, or, more often, improvised. To the Western-trained ear, both tune and rhythm are monotonous.

534
[199]

Most of the musical instruments used in these bands are of Persian origin. Grenard lists the following instruments:

Doutar—a long guitar with two strings.